

HIGH-PERFORMANCE NETWORK SWITCH

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CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application No. ^{now U.S. Patent No. 6,697,368,} 09/855,031, filed on May 15, 2001, the full text of which is incorporated herein by reference as if reproduced in full below. 54

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[0002] The invention relates generally to network switches.

Background Art

[0003] A network switch is a device that provides a switching function (i.e., determines a physical path) in a data communications network. Switching involves transferring information, such as digital data packets or frames, among entities of the network. Typically, a switch is a computer having a plurality of circuit cards coupled to a backplane. In the switching art, the circuit cards are typically called "blades." The blades are interconnected by a "switch fabric." Each blade includes a number of physical ports that couple the switch to the other network entities over various types of media, such as Ethernet, FDDI (Fiber Distributed Data Interface), or token ring connections. A network entity includes any device that transmits and/or receives data packets over such media.

[0004] The switching function provided by the switch typically includes receiving data at a source port from a network entity and transferring the data to a destination port. The source and destination ports may be located on the same